

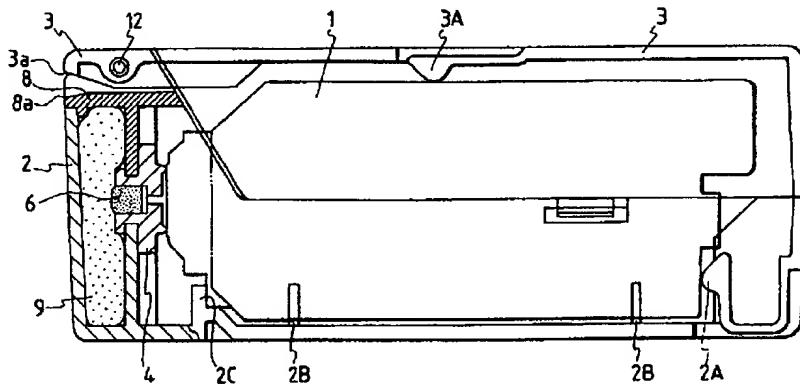
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 (54) **RECIPIENT DE STOCKAGE**  
 (54) **STORAGE CONTAINER**



(57) Contenant de rangement pour loger et ranger une cartouche à jet d'encre munie d'une tête d'écriture pour décharger de l'encre, et un réservoir d'encre pour contenir l'encre à fournir à la tête d'écriture et qui est structuré de manière à pouvoir être changé par rapport à un appareil d'écriture comprend un élément de fermeture destiné à être en contact avec la surface où se trouve l'orifice de décharge d'encre sur la tête d'écriture pour couvrir la surface et des éléments absorbants raccordés de manière conductrice à l'élément de fermeture pour absorber l'encre qui fuit de ladite tête d'écriture. Avec l'élément de fermeture et l'élément absorbant, on obtient une étanchéité à l'air supérieure à celle des orifices de décharge de manière à prévenir l'évaporation de l'encre par les orifices de décharge de la tête d'écriture pendant que la cartouche qui est encore en usage est gardée dans le contenant de rangement.

(57) A storage container for housing and storing an ink jet cartridge which has a recording head to discharge ink, and an ink tank to contain ink to be supplied to the recording head and which is structured to be exchangeable with respect to a recording apparatus comprises a capping member to be in contact with the ink discharge port surface of the recording head to cover the surface thereof and absorbing members conductively connected to the capping member to absorb ink which leaks from said recording head. With the capping member and absorbing member, an airtightness higher than that of the discharge ports is secured to suppress the ink evaporation from the discharge ports of the recording head while the cartridge which is still in use is kept in the storage container.

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STORAGE CONTAINER

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Field of the Invention

5        The present invention relates to a storage container to house and store an ink jet cartridge when it is not in use. Such a cartridge is attachable to or detachable from a recording apparatus which performs a desired recording by discharging ink from a discharge port.

10      Related Background Art

For an ink jet recording apparatus which performs a desired recording by discharging ink from its recording head, there are roughly modes wherein a recording head and an ink tank containing ink to be discharged from the recording head are provided separately to replace the ink tanks when the ink is exhausted, and a cartridge type comprising a recording head and an ink tank integrally, which is structured to be replaceable with respect to an apparatus.

20       The recording head of a cartridge form is housed for storage in such a manner that a sealing is given to the discharge port portion of the recording head and further, the seal for the discharge port portion is pressed by a cap, that is, in a mode of the so-called blister pack housing container, when the cartridge is distributed as disclosed in Japanese Patent Application Laid-Open No. 3-101944, Japanese Patent Application

Laid-Open No. 3-101945, Japanese Patent Application

Laid-Open No. 3-176156, and Japanese Patent Application

Laid-Open No. 3-234659, for example.

Now, if for some reason the ink jet cartridge should  
5 be stored temporarily while it is still in use for  
recording, it is difficult to utilize the above-  
mentioned storage container for preserving the  
cartridge again. In other words, although it is  
possible to attach a cap even to the cartridge which  
10 has been opened once for the use, and store it in the  
container, it is impossible to arrange an airtight  
condition for the discharge ports; thus being unable to  
suppress the evaporation of ink from the discharge port  
portion, leading to a possibility that the discharge  
15 ports are clogged among other adverse effects.

On the other hand, there are proposed the  
structures of storage containers dedicated for storing  
a cartridge of the kind such as disclosed  
in Japanese Patent Application Laid-Open  
20 No. 61-93264, and others. The proposed  
structures are such that a cover is provided  
to make the inner space of the container a  
substantially airtight while the material of an  
extremely low permeability is used to form the  
25 container in order to suppress the evaporation of ink.

Nevertheless, there is still a possibility that  
ink is evaporated until the component in the inner

airtight space becomes the same as the component of the  
ink, that is, until an equilibrium state is reached, or  
a possibility that the ink begins leaking from the  
discharge ports due to changes in surrounding  
5 environment. It is also difficult to secure the  
airtightness sufficiently; hence causing the discharge  
ports to be clogged in some cases. The reliability is  
not good enough.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

10 It is an object of the present invention to solve  
the foregoing technical problems and provide a storage  
container capable of performing a highly reliable  
storage of an ink jet cartridge which is still in use.

15 The inventor hereof et al. have acquired a  
knowledge after assiduous discussions and experiments  
for the achievement of the aforesaid object that at least  
a cap and absorbing member should be provided for a  
storage container to secure an airtightness in it which  
is higher than that of the discharge ports in order to  
20 suppress the ink evaporation, at the same time retaining  
in the absorbing member any ink that may leak due to  
changes in the surrounding environment; hence  
maintaining the wetting state in the cap to prevent the  
discharge ports from being clogged, and attain a highly  
25 reliable storage of the cartridge.

Further, it is known that even the clogged  
discharge ports can be recovered by an ink exhaust

operation with the provision of a so-called recovery mechanism wherein a pump is connected to a cap to perform the ink exhaust from the discharge ports. With the knowledges thus acquired, a storage container 5 having a higher reliability can be provided.

The present invention is designed on the basis of these knowledges and experiments, and there are provided the following for a storage container to house and store an ink jet cartridge structured to be 10 replaceable with respect to a recording apparatus, which comprises a recording head to discharge ink, and an ink tank to contain ink to be supplied to the aforesaid recording head according to the present invention:

15 a capping member to cover the ink discharge port surface by contacting with the ink discharge port surface of the aforesaid recording head portion; and an absorbing member conductively connected to the aforesaid capping member to absorb any ink leaking from 20 the aforesaid discharge port surface.

Further, the storage container is provided with pumping means conductively connected to the capping member to generate pressure to cause ink to be exhausted from the aforesaid recording head, and the 25 exhausted ink from the recording head is retained in the aforesaid absorbing member.

Since at least a cap and an absorbing member are

provided according to the present invention, it is possible to secure an airtightness higher than that of the discharge ports and suppress the ink evaporation from the discharge ports. Also, with the absorbing member, it is 5 possible to retain any ink that may leak due to changes in the surrounding environment. In this way, a wetting state is maintained in the space formed by the discharge port formation surface and the capping member thereby to make it difficult to create any resultant 10 clogging of the discharge ports. Also, with the provision of a recovery mechanism, it is possible to remove such clogging particles by causing ink to be exhausted from the discharge ports even if there should be any discharge port which has been clogged.

15 BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

Fig. 1 is a cross sectional view schematically showing the structure of a storage container provided with a cap and an absorbing member according to the present invention.

20 Fig. 2 is a cross sectional view schematically showing the structure of a storage container provided with a cap, an absorbing member, and a pump mechanism according to the present invention.

Fig. 3 is a cross sectional view schematically 25 showing the outer appearance of a storage container according to an embodiment of the present invention.

Fig. 4 is a perspective view schematically

illustrating the outer appearance of a storage container according to an embodiment of the present invention.

5 Fig. 5 is a schematic view partially showing one structural example of the coupling state of a storage container according to the present invention.

Fig. 6 is a view schematically showing another embodiment of the storage container according to the present invention.

10 DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

Hereinafter, with reference to the accompanying drawings, the description will be made in detail of the specific embodiments according to the present invention.

15 Fig. 4 is a perspective view schematically illustrating the outer appearance of a storage container according to an embodiment of the present invention. Also, Fig. 1 is a cross sectional view schematically showing the structure of storage 20 container according to an embodiment of the present invention.

As shown in Fig. 4, a storage container comprises a storing unit in which an ink cartridge 1 is arranged for storage; a lower housing 2 having an opening 25 through which the ink cartridge is stored or withdrawn; and an upper housing 3 which serves as a covering member to cover the opening and to open or close it

when the ink cartridge is stored or withdrawn. The upper housing 3 is arranged to pivot on a hinge pin 12 with respect to the lower housing 2 for the storage and withdrawal of the ink cartridge 1.

5       Further as shown in Fig. 1, the storage container is arranged so that the cap 4 which covers the ink discharge port surface is positioned to face the ink jet cartridge 1 when it is installed at one end side of the lower housing 2 of the container. Thus, it is  
10      possible to suppress the unfavorable ink evaporation from the discharge ports by creating an airtight space with the cap 4 which covers the ink discharge port surface. In this respect, the ink jet cartridge is pressed by a spring member 2A which will be described  
15      later from its rear side in order to cause the ink discharge port surface to be pressed against the cap 4 for the formation of a highly precise airtight space by the use of the ink discharge port surface and the cap 4. Furthermore, it is preferable to form the cap 4  
20      with a resilient material such as rubber to make the airtightness securer.

Also, behind the cap 4, a first absorbing member 6 and a second absorbing member 9 are provided. These absorbing members 6 and 9 are arranged to absorb any ink to begin  
25      leaking due to changes in the surrounding environment from the ink discharge ports tightly closed by the cap 4. Particularly, the first absorbing member 6 has a capability

to keep the airtight space in a wetting state by the leaking ink and is able to prevent the ink discharge ports to be clogged effectively and desirably.

As described earlier, in the lower housing 2 of 5 the storage container, a spring member 2A is provided to generate a compression to press the cap 4 against the discharge port surface of the ink jet cartridge 1. This spring member 2A is a flat spring integrally formed with the lower housing 2 with an inclined upper 10 surface having a slope toward the bottom of the lower housing 2 in order to smooth the installation of the ink jet cartridge 1 in the container.

On the other hand, on a part of the upper housing 3 of the storage container, a spring member 3A is 15 integrally formed with the upper housing 3, and when the upper housing 3 is closed, the ink jet cartridge 1 is pressed thereby from the above toward the bottom of the lower housing 2. These spring members 2A and 3A are formed with the respective housings 2 and 3; hence 20 enabling the number of parts to be reduced for the implementation of the cost reduction and easier fabrication.

Also, in the lower housing 2, there are provided 25 ribs 2B on the bottom and side face to be in contact with the bottom and side face of the cartridge 1 and also, a rib 2C in the vicinity of the side face where the cap 4 is arranged to be in contact with a part of

the front end of the recording head, respectively.

These ribs 2B and 2C are arranged to position the ink jet cartridge 1 for storage in the container and make it possible to enhance the precision with which to

5 position the cartridge 1 in cooperation with the foregoing spring members 2A and 3A which press the cartridge. Thus, the protective condition of the ink discharge ports by the cap 4 becomes more reliable.

Now, Fig. 2 illustrates a storage container in  
10 which a structure is adopted to remove the clogging particles of the discharge ports by providing a pumping means capable of performing a recovery operation positively in addition to the protection given to the discharge ports by the mode wherein the cap 4 and  
15 absorbing members 6 and 9 are provided in the storage container as described above.

As clear from Fig. 2, a pumping mechanism is arranged between the cap 4 and the second absorbing member 9 to suck ink from the ink discharge ports in addition to  
20 the structure shown in Fig. 1. The pumping mechanism mainly comprises a cylinder 5, a piston 10, and a piston rod 7. The pumping mechanism is conductively connected through the passage provided with the cap 4 and the first absorbing member 6, and further, the ink which  
25 is sucked by the pumping mechanism is collected to the second absorbing member 9 which is conductively connected to the pumping mechanism. The piston rod 7 which causes

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the piston 10 to be vertically moved is coupled to the upper housing 3 constituting the storage container, and an arrangement is made to actuate the pump to operate by the opening and closing operation of the upper

5 housing 3.

The pumping operation is performed as given below. In other words, with the releasing operation of the upper housing 3, the piston 10 at the lower dead point in the cylinder 5 is shifted upward by the piston rod 7

10 (the upper face of the piston rod 7 being closely in contact with the bottom end of the piston 10), and the pump chamber A formed between the cylinder 5 and the piston rod 7 is expanded with its pressure being reduced. When the piston 10 is positioned at the upper dead point

15 after passing the passage provided with the first absorbing member which conductively connects the pumping mechanism and the cap 4, the ink discharge port portion of the ink jet cartridge is in a state of a reduced pressure so that ink is forcibly exhausted from the

20 discharge ports by suction. Then, the exhausted ink flows into the pumping chamber A passing through the passage. Subsequently, the piston 10 at the upper dead point is shifted downward by the closing operation of the upper housing 3 to the upper face of the piston rod

25 7 and the bottom end of the piston 10 which have been in a close contact are now parted. Thus, the ink in the pumping chamber A flows into the upper portion of

the piston 10 through a groove formed in the piston rod 7. The ink is absorbed and retained in the second absorbing member 9 which is conductively connected to the pumping mechanism along an arrow mark in Fig. 2.

5 In this respect, the first absorbing member 6 arranged in the connecting passage between the cap 4 and the pumping mechanism has an effect to prevent the sucked ink from being returned again by the shift of the piston 10 into the cap 4 which is closely in contact  
10 with the discharge ports.

Fig. 3 is a view schematically showing a storage container in which another structural example of the pumping mechanism is installed. This pumping mechanism is such that an opening is provided at the bottom of a  
15 cylinder 5 with a check valve 10 which closes or opens the aforesaid opening in synchronism with the shift of a piston rod 7. An O ring is provided for the piston rod 7 to secure the airtightness for the cylinder 5. The foregoing check valve 10 is structured with rubber or some  
20 other material in the present embodiment. The structure of the pumping mechanism shown in Fig. 3 enables the piston rod 7 positioned at the lower dead point in the cylinder 5 fixed to an upper housing 3 to be shifted upward by the releasing operation of the upper  
25 housing 3. Thus, the check valve 10 at the bottom of the cylinder 5 closes the cylinder opening, and a pumping chamber A formed between the bottom end of the

piston rod 7 and the cylinder 5 is expanded with its pressure being reduced. When the piston rod 7 is positioned at the upper dead point after passing the passage where a first absorbing member conductively connected to the cap 4 is provided, the ink discharge port portion of the ink jet cartridge is in a state of the reduced pressure so that ink is forcibly exhausted from the discharge port by suction. Then, the sucked ink is caused to flow into the pumping chamber A through the passage. Subsequently, when the piston rod 7 at the upper dead point is shifted downward by the closing operation of the upper housing 3, the check valve 10 which has been closely in contact with the bottom opening of the cylinder 5 is parted from the bottom face of the cylinder 5. The ink in the pumping chamber A flows therefrom to be absorbed and retained by the second absorbing member 9 which is conductively connected to the pumping mechanism along an arrow mark in Fig. 3.

The aforesaid second absorbing member 9 has a capacity to absorb the total quantity of ink contained in the ink jet cartridge. The present embodiment includes an absorbing member 9 capable of collecting ink of approximately 25 cc. This is a resultant volume worked out by a calculation with an effective efficiency of 70% in order to prevent any leakage of the absorbed ink due to changes in the surrounding environment. The maximum storable quantity of the exhausted ink by the absorbing

member 9 is approximately 35 cc.

Now, for the structure in which the piston rod 7 fixed to the upper housing 3 is operated by the utilization of the opening and closing operation of the 5 upper housing 3 as in the above-mentioned pumping mechanism of the storage container, there is a need for regulating the range within which the upper housing 3 should be opened or closed. In other words, without any measure to regulate such a range, the releasing 10 state of the upper housing 3 is assumed to be regulated by the stroke of the pump at the upper dead point. Therefore, the load given to the pump becomes too great, and if any great force is exerted unnecessarily 15 on the upper housing 3, there is a possibility that the pumping mechanism is destroyed.

Therefore, according to the present embodiment, a regulating member 13 is provided between the upper housing 3 and the lower housing 2 of the storage container as shown in Fig. 4. This regulating member 20 13 comprises a board provided with an opening configured along the locus of the open and close operation of the upper housing 3, and a pin provided on the lower housing 2 side which engages with this opening. Then, the board member is fixed to the upper 25 housing 3 at one end with the opening being arranged to engage with the pin. The releasing position of the upper housing 3 is regulated by the engagement between

the one end of the pin and the opening of the board member so as to restrict any further releasing operation. With this positional regulation implemented by the dedicated regulating member 13 for the upper 5 housing 3, it is possible to protect the pumping mechanism from any damage assuredly even when any power is given to releasing the upper housing 3 more than required. It is also possible to drive the pumping mechanism reliably. Here, it is preferable to use a 10 metal or the like as a material to form the board member because of the sufficient strength needed.

In this respect, the structure of the regulating member 13 is not necessarily confined to the one shown in Fig. 4. For example, it may be possible to adopt a 15 structure thereby to arrange a slope 3a as shown in Fig. 2 on the leading end side of the hinge 12 serving as the center of the opening and closing operation of the upper housing 3 which is fixed thereto, and then, to regulate the releasing angle of the upper housing 3 20 in cooperation with the wall face 8a of the lower housing 2 side which is in the position opposite to the slope thus arranged. Nevertheless, from the viewpoint of the reliability, it is more preferable to provide the regulating member 13.

25 Now, the ink jet cartridge to be stored in the storage container requires an attention given to its storing mode because it contains a liquid ink therein.

In other words, if the recording head portion of the cartridge should be held upward in relation to the gravitational direction for storage, there is a possibility that ink returns from the recording head portion to the tank side. If ink is thus removed from the recording head portion, the recovery operation should be repeated more than a given time when the cartridge is used for the next recording; hence making it difficult to maintain the reliability in storage.

Therefore, according to the present embodiment, the cartridge receiving side of the storage container is curved in its configuration as at 3B in order to make it difficult to hold the recording head portion upward in relation to the gravitational direction. In this way, it is possible to avoid the foregoing problem simply because the recording head portion can hardly be positioned upward when stored in the container. This means that it will suffice if only the storage container is prevented from being laid down with its side end downward by providing a slope or the like on the side face of the container opposite to the position where the recording head should not be placed when stored.

The aforesaid storage container can be preferably used as a provisional storage container for an ink cartridge still in use when another ink jet cartridge should be used among some other cases.

A recording mode of the kind can be preferably utilized for performing a color recording with an apparatus provided with one carriage on which one ink jet cartridge is mountable, for example. In other 5 words, if an image should desirably be formed emphatically in red ink by the use of an apparatus wherein recordings are performed by an ink cartridge which usually contains black ink, the objective recording should be executed by exchanging a red ink 10 cartridge and a black ink cartridge as required. Then, after the termination of such a recording, the red ink cartridge which is still usable can be kept in storage by the foregoing storage container in a highly reliable condition.

15 Also, if a recording should be performed by exchanging more numbers of different ink cartridges with each other, a plurality of storage containers matching the number of cartridges are required. (Usually, a black ink cartridge is most often used, and 20 when such a recording is terminated, the black ink cartridge remains to be installed on the apparatus in most cases. Then, at least a corresponding number of storage containers for the remaining color ink cartridges are needed). When a plurality of storage 25 containers are required in a case such as this, it is preferable to make such numbers of storage containers available for each color together rather than

individually. Here, as shown in Fig. 4, a rail member 2a and a rail member receptacle 2b are arranged on the side faces of the storage container, and by connecting them, plural storage containers can be put together  
5 desirably. According to the present embodiment, the rail member 2a and rail member receptacle 2b are of the so-called slit tail configuration to fit them each other as shown in Fig. 5, and are arranged to slidably engage with each other to form its integration or  
10 separation.

Furthermore, Fig. 6 is a view schematically showing a storage container which is provided with a stopper as a regulating member 13. A storage container of a type where a suction recovery mechanism is  
15 provided for an ink jet cartridge is arranged to perform its recovery operation by the opening and closing operation of the upper housing. Therefore, any unnecessary opening and closing operation of the upper housing leads to a wasteful consumption of ink. To  
20 counteract this, a stopper 13a is provided as the regulating member 13 as shown in Fig. 6 so that the upper housing can be fixed at its maximum releasing position. Thus, there is no possibility that the upper housing will be closed by its own weight and the like; making  
25 it possible to prevent any unnecessary opening and closing operation when the cartridge is removed. Also, with this arrangement, it becomes easier to remove the

cartridge.

Now, the material used for a storage container of the kind should preferably be a material which is strong enough but easy to be machined. To name some, 5 plastic, ABS and the like as a preferable material. Moreover, using a transparent or semitransparent material for the storage container, it is possible to ascertain whether any cartridge is in the container or not; hence preventing any unnecessary opening and closing 10 operation. Also, in this way, the ink retained in the second absorbing member 9 is visible. If, therefore, a number of color ink storage containers are employed, it is possible to confirm each individual ink color and prevent any color mixture for the head. Further, the 15 quantity of absorbed ink in the second absorbing member 9 is also recognizable. Hence, the absolute quantity of absorption of the ink absorbing member can be grasped. Therefore, if the second absorbing member 9 is arranged to be a three-layer structure at 9a to 9c, for example, it is 20 possible to grasp more clearly the absolute quantity of absorption of the ink absorbing member because ink is being absorbed by each absorbing member of the layers in that order.

In this respect, according to Fig. 6, in addition to the first absorbing member and second absorbing members 9a 25 to 9c, a third absorbing member 14 is provided in the circumference of the cap 4. This third absorbing member is exactly of an L-letter shape, and is installed on the lower side

and left-hand side of the cap 4 in order to prevent the inside of the storage container from being stained if any counterflow of ink should occur by some reason. A reference numeral 15 designates an air conduit opening 5 provided for the purpose of adjusting the pump pressure appropriately.

It is preferable to use a storage container of the kind for storing the color ink cartridge which is not in use frequently as described above. Accordingly, it 10 is preferable to adopt a mode wherein the storage container for the cartridge and color ink cartridge are packed in one package when sold on a market. Then, a mode is still adopted so that the cartridge is collected together with the storage container when the 15 ink in the cartridge is totally consumed. It is thus possible to eliminate any possibility to stain the surrounding environment by the leakage of slightly remaining ink in the cartridge in the process of collection of the used cartridge.

20 As described above, according to the present invention, there are provided at least a cap and absorbing member to secure an airtightness higher than that of the discharge ports; hence making it possible to suppress the ink evaporation from the discharge ports. 25 Also, with the absorbing member, it is possible to retain the ink which leaks due to changes in the surrounding environment and thus, keep the inside of a space formed

by the cap and the discharge port formation surface to  
be in a wetting condition thereby to eliminate a  
possibility that the discharge ports are clogged. In  
addition, with the provision of a recovery mechanism,  
5 it is possible to remove the clogging particles by  
causing ink to be exhausted from the discharge ports  
even if there occur some discharge ports which are  
clogged.

It is, therefore, possible to provide a storage  
10 container capable of storing with a high reliability an  
ink jet cartridge which is still in use.

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THE EMBODIMENTS OF THE INVENTION IN WHICH AN EXCLUSIVE PROPERTY OR PRIVILEGE IS CLAIMED ARE DEFINED AS FOLLOWS:

1. A storage container for housing and storing an ink jet cartridge having a recording head to discharge ink, and an ink tank to contain ink to be supplied to said recording head, and being structured to be exchangeable with respect to a recording apparatus, comprising:
  - 5 a capping member to be in contact with the ink discharge port surface of said recording head to cover said ink discharge port surface; and
  - 10 absorbing members conductively connected to said capping member to absorb ink leaking from said recording head.
2. A storage container according to Claim 1, wherein
  - 15 said storage container further comprises pumping means conductively connected to said capping member to generate a pressure to cause ink to be exhausted from said recording head and retain the exhausted ink from said recording head in said absorbing members.
3. A storage container according to Claim 1 or Claim 2, wherein
  - 20 said storage container further comprises an opening to store or withdraw said recording head, a housing having a portion to house said recording head, and a capping member to cover said opening of said

housing, and a spring member is provided in said housing to press said stored recording head so that said ink discharge port surface is pressed to be in contact with said capping member.

5

4. A storage container according to Claim 3,  
wherein

said spring member is a flat spring integrally formed with said housing.

10

5. A storage container according to Claim 3,  
wherein

said spring member is structured with a resilient flat spring separately fixed to said housing.

15

6. A storage container according to Claim 3,  
wherein

the covering member of said storage container is provided with a spring member integrally or separately 20 formed therewith to press said stored ink jet cartridge to the bottom of said housing.

7. A storage container according to Claim 3,  
wherein

25 a piston rod constituting said pumping member is coupled to the covering member of said storage container to drive said pumping member in accordance

1 with the opening and closing operation of said covering member to cause ink to be exhausted from said recording head.

5 8. A storage container according to Claim 2, wherein an absorbing member is provided in a part of connecting passage between said cap and said pumping member.

10 9. A storage container according to Claim 3, wherein a regulating member is provided for said storage container to regulate at least the maximum releasing condition of said covering member.

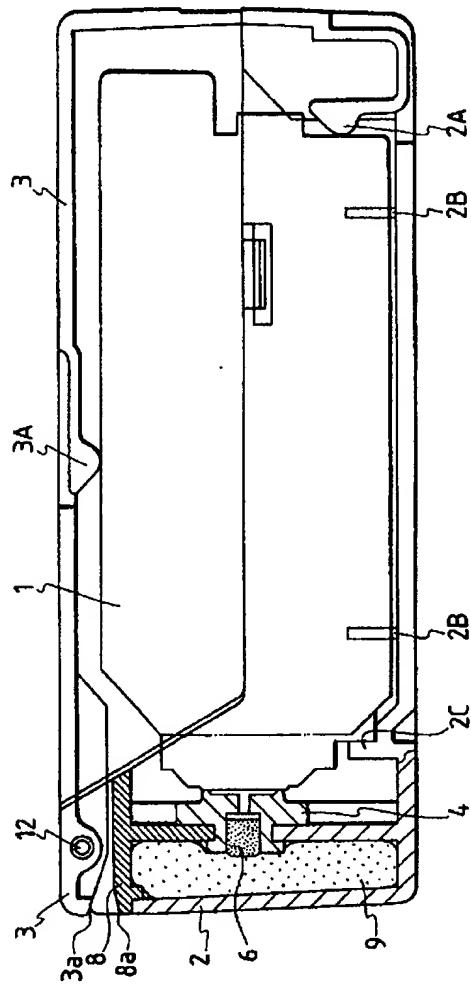
15 10. A storage container according to any one of Claim 1 to Claim 3, wherein an inclined portion is provided in said storage container for a part of the housing constituting said container so that at least the ink discharge port portion of said recording head is not positioned upward 20 in the gravitational direction.

11. A storage container according to any one of Claim 1 to Claim 3, wherein engaging means are provided on the side faces of 25 said storage container in order to connect another storage container.

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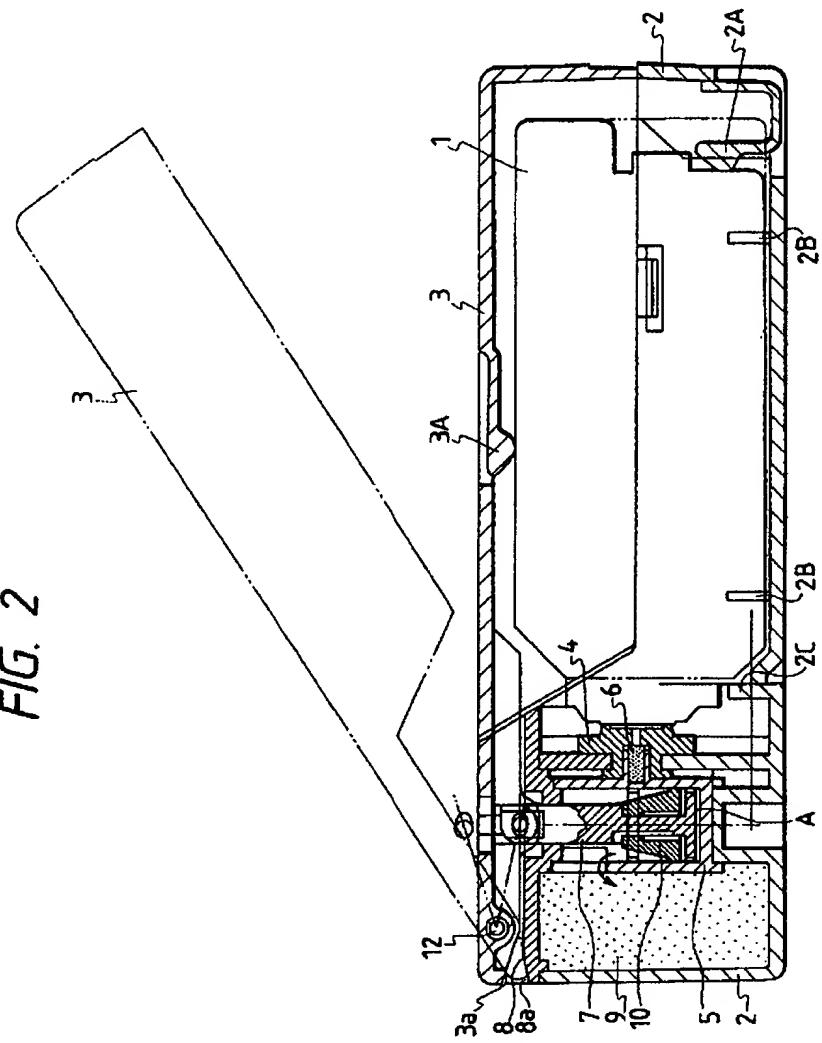
FIG. 1



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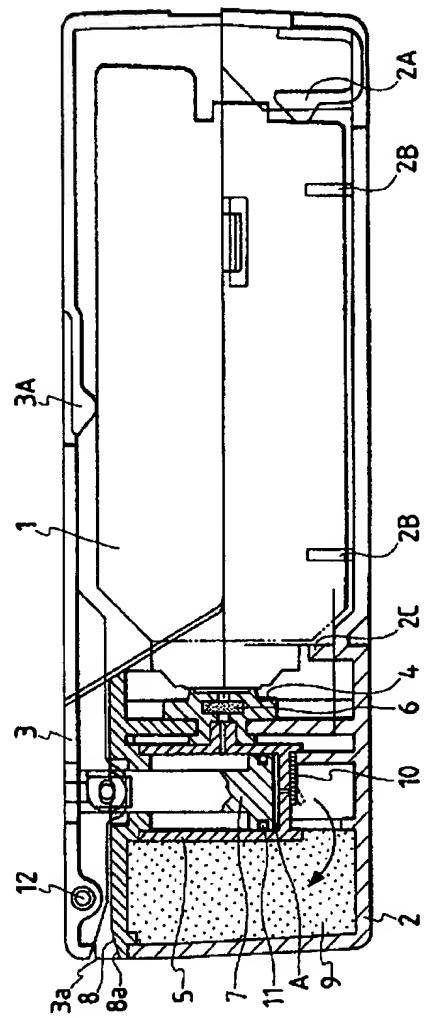
FIG. 2



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FIG. 3



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FIG. 4

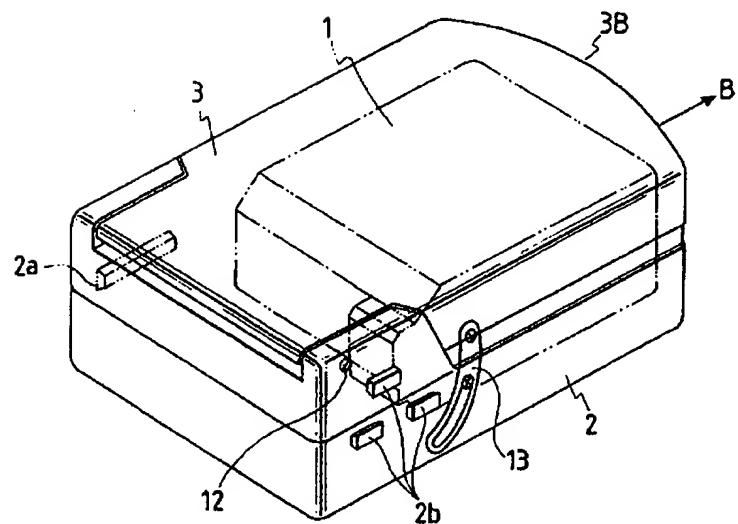
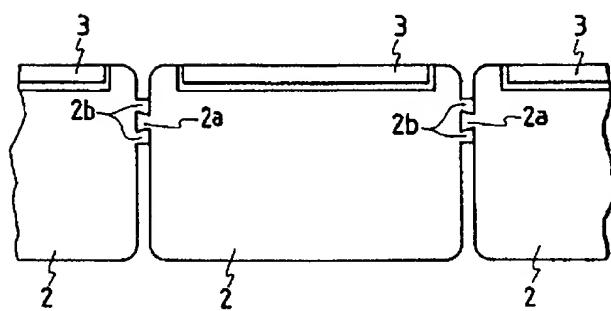


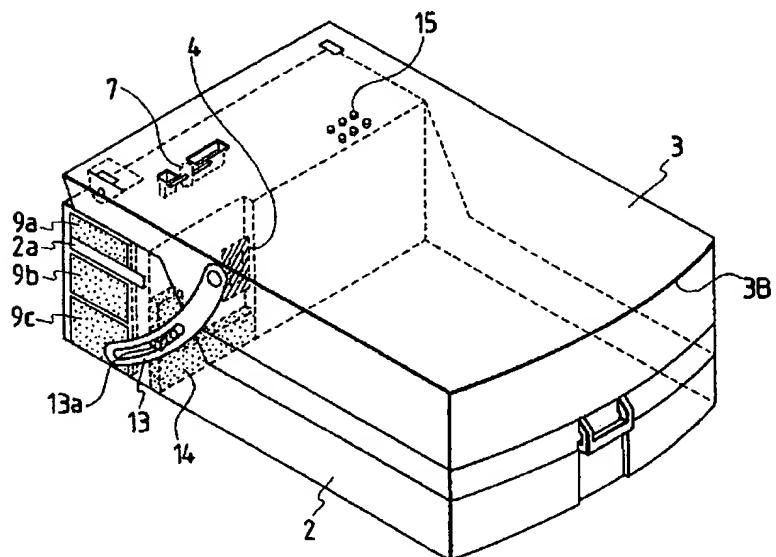
FIG. 5



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*FIG. 6*



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ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

A storage container for housing and storing an ink jet cartridge which has a recording head to discharge ink, and an ink tank to contain ink to be supplied to the recording head and which is structured to be exchangeable with respect to a recording apparatus 5 comprises a capping member to be in contact with the ink discharge port surface of the recording head to cover the surface thereof and absorbing members conductively connected to the capping member to absorb ink which 10 leaks from said recording head. With the capping member and absorbing member, an airtightness higher than that of the discharge ports is secured to suppress the ink evaporation from the discharge ports of the recording 15 head while the cartridge which is still in use is kept in the storage container.